



Minutes Council Meeting & Regular Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 13, 2021, from 9:30 am – 11:00 am

This meeting was held via Zoom Video Conference and Audio Teleconference only.

24 Participants: Jason Vermillion, Erik Apland, Gabe Foster, Rob Bartsch, John Stone, Eric Sweet, Ryan McKillop, Charles Tyler, Mike Lee, Wes Nott, Pa Yang, Brent Haste, Art Craigmill, Curtis Canfield, Dewaina Edens, Sean Griffis, Pam Cook, Cecilia, Siller Brothers Inc, Madison Thomson, Rani Isaac, Jesse Golden, Jeff Stephens, Allison Thomson

Welcome/Agenda: Executive Director Allison Thomson welcomed everyone to the meeting and announced that Jeanene Upton has resigned from her position as Admin Assistant at YWPFSC. Thank you to Jeanene for her service to the Fire Safe Council!

Public Comments:

- Rani Isaac: The Department of Insurance just released draft text of new regulations: Mitigation in Rating Plans and Wildfire Risk Models. There will be a virtual public discussion on November 10, 2021 at 1:00pm. More information is attached.
- John Stone introduced himself as the new planner at Yuba County Office of Emergency Services.

Partner Reports:

- **USFS, Plumas National Forest, Feather River Ranger District: Jason Vermillion**
 - Dixie Fire is still at 963,000 acres, 94% contained, approx. 1200 personnel still on the fire, main focus is currently mop-up and suppression repair. This has been an unprecedented fire season. So many people have put in so much effort to try to stop these fires from impacting communities. We try with what we've got, but so far it's not enough due to years of lack of treatment. There is still so much work to do to make our communities and our forests safe.
 - Suppression repair continues on the 2020 North Complex Fire. USFS Chief and Regional Forester visited this summer – They asked: what are some innovative ideas to get hazard trees down and deal with the effects of these high severity fires? Where can the salvaged timber go? They welcome everyone's ideas.
 - Salvage sales ongoing in Feather Falls and Brush Creek areas.
 - Through the YWA CCI Yuba Foothills Healthy Forest Grant Project, USFS was able to complete clearing work on egress/ingress routes around Challenge. Fire engines were previously unable to pass these roads, but now they plan to maintain the roads into the future.
- **USFS, Plumas National Forest, Feather River Ranger District: Erik Apland**
 - Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TREX) event is occurring in two weeks with plans to complete prescribed burns this winter. Approximately 110 participants are signed up for this training event in Butte County. Possibilities for future events if folks are interested, possibly in coordination with both the Plumas and Tahoe National Forests.
 - Planned pile burning upcoming once conditions are right.
 - Mastication occurring around Forbestown and Sunset Lookout.

- Fuels conditions: although we've had a little rain, it is still very dry. 1000-hour fuels are around 6.5% - has not recovered since mid-summer lows of 2.5% moisture content. We need significantly more rain to make our way out of fire season.
- **USFS, Tahoe National Forest, Yuba River Ranger District: Gabe Foster**
 - Primary focus of the summer was suppression, still ongoing. Looking forward to potential burn windows later this winter in the higher elevations
 - 1000-hour fuels currently 8-10%, staffing Level 5
 - 90 acres of piles left in Garden Valley area
 - October 15 hoping to start HCHP work around Garden Valley and Pendola/Garden Point (about 400 acres)
 - North Yuba Landscape Project
 - First two projects: Galloway and Rattlesnake-Skinner (over 25,000 acres, working on layout and prep – aiming to have complete by end of 2023)
 - Need to come up with creative solutions to dealing with unprecedented amount of fuels. This is truly a national emergency and needs to be treated as such.
- **CAL FIRE: Rob Bartsch**
 - Large incidents are calming down locally, no major statewide CAL FIRE incidents except for the Alisal Fire in Santa Barbara. Local CAL FIRE has not sent any resources to that fire
 - In Yuba County recently there were a handful of small fires with the recent winds. One fire at Beale AFB was 60 acres, but no structures were damaged.
 - Even with cooler temperatures and a small amount of rain, all that rain has dried up and fuels are still very dry. CAL FIRE is launching a Facebook campaign called "Don't Fall For It" – emphasizing that we're not out of fire season yet. We all still need to be diligent about getting messaging out. Burn restrictions will not be lifted anytime soon.
 - Still at peak staffing at stations and air base. 90-day exclusive use contract for a helicopter ends next week – it won't be at Auburn base on a daily basis anymore. If Northern CAL FIRE units start getting more rain, aircraft could move down to our base.
 - Rx burns and VMPs in the works near American River and in Nevada County. In Yuba County, one project in Richards Ranch area is about ready to go, but no burning will occur until residential burn restrictions are lifted.
 - Oregon Peak Lookout – repairs upcoming, and fuels crews will work on clearing this winter. Volunteers have done a great job keeping the lookout running.
 - Forecast: monsoonal moisture associated with La Nina could reach us or go around us, but unknown until it's about 2 weeks out – it's either going to rain or it's not going to rain. In general, forecasts are not expecting significant weather pattern change until December 1 at the earliest.
- **Yuba County Community Development and Services Agency: Mike Lee**
 - Recently received \$500,000 grant from HCB Disaster Recovery Program as a result of recent incidents. This grant will remove fuels along 46 miles of County roadways to provide for ingress/egress routes and firebreaks in case of wildfire. Roads include: Baker Road, Young's Hill, La Porte Road, Marysville Road, Frenchtown-Dobbins, Frenchtown Road, Oregon Hill Road, Mountain House, Challenge Cutoff, Indiana Ranch, Indiana School, Pendola, Cleveland.
 - County Administrator presented to BOS with proposed expenditure plan for Measure K revenues, which includes funding Fire Prevention Officer position and additional funds for Roadside Clearing Program. Dollar amounts will come out soon.
 - County recently received a proposal to set up a log processing and export yard on Hammonton Road near the gold fields. Contact Planning Department for more information.
 - Have not found anyone yet for the new Fire Prevention Officer position.

- Rob Bartsch called out County Road 270 as needing significant roadside clearing work. There aren't many houses but it is a very strategic location for CAL FIRE. That is a potential road for Measure K funding.
- **Yuba County Public Works: Wes Nott**
 - Report on work completed in County Service Area 2 – Yuba County Public Works and YWPFSC worked together on this cost-share project of roadside vegetation clearing along 2.5 miles of roadway in CSA-2, and followup herbicide treatment to maintain weeds and regrowth. YCPW is interested in partnering with YWPFSC on additional projects in Community Service Areas.
- **Oregon Peak Lookout Tower VIP Program: Allison Thomson reported for Gary Fildes**
 - The lookout will be staffed most days of the week this month. Staffing will continue until it rains or it becomes cold enough for a number of residents to start using their wood stoves and fireplaces. At that point we can't determine if we have a fire or not.
- **Yuba County Resource Conservation District: Allison Thomson reported for Gary Fildes**
 - YCRCD had their 1st meeting to start the process to consolidate the Yuba and Sutter RCDs.
 - YCRCD is having a needs assessment completed this winter, which will tie into discussions with YWPFSC about long-term growth strategies for both organizations.
- **Camptonville Community Partnership: Allison Thomson reported for Cathy LeBlanc**
 - Special Needs Defensible Space Program – work is almost complete on a total of 9 homes. This program is in high demand and will need to find additional funding in order to meet that demand for this important work.
 - Forest Biomass Business Center – Milestones: Power Purchase Agreement and Air Permit received! Engineering Procurement and Construction contractor will be selected soon. The Timberland Conversion Permit is in process. CCP is working with Sierra Institute on a Build Back Better grant to assist with the development of the co-located business campus.
- **Sierra Pacific Industries: Ryan McKillop**
 - Waiting for good weather to get working on mastication work west of the Brownsville Airport that is part of the Brownsville Fuelbreak – contractor lined up and ready, just waiting for the weather and fuel moisture to be safe enough to work. That fuel treatment work will continue south to Hansonville Hill, across Willow Glen Road, up Chittenden Ridge. Pending future grant opportunities, this fuelbreak work will continue down to Marysville Road.
 - Forest Health grant units are a little behind due to change of ownership and lack of biomass facilities. Log and biomass market will be a challenge for the next few years.
 - Recent spray work on Hansonville Hill in the fuelbreak on the ridge. Crews are very busy in burned acres, so spraying in the forest health grant area is a challenge.
 - SPI is eager to support future fuelbreak work and is committed to getting defensible fuelbreaks established and maintained.
- **The CHY Company: Madison Thomson**
 - About 700 acres of biomass chipping completed in the last couple years in the Yuba County area as part of the Yuba Foothills Healthy Forest Project. Work on that project continues: 300 acre unit in Brownsville area between Forsythe Rd and New York House Road. This work will continue all winter: won't ship much more chipped material this year, but feller bunchers will be cutting all winter.
 - Other biomass chipping operations coming up soon, funded through Stevens Fund and Healthy Forest Project – near Hansonville Hill, Brownsville, Forbestown. Upcoming mastication project by Cottage Creek Campground near Bullards Bar, starting again in November, and more mastication and fuelbreak maintenance in Oregon Ridge area.

Special Presentation: [Sutter and Yuba Love](#) – Jeff Stephens

- Jeff Stephens had to leave mid-meeting for an emergency – we will connect with him in the future.
- SAYLOVE is a grassroots citizen organization formed to care and support the Yuba-Sutter area and cleaning up our community. Allison was connected with Jeff via Art Craigmill, and we thought this could be a great opportunity to collaborate on cleaning and clearing projects in the Foothills. We invited Jeff here to tell us about SAYLOVE's work and what kind of projects we might be able to start collaborating on.

YWP&FSC Reports:

- **Outreach-Education Committee: Allison Thomson reported for Beverly Cameron-Fildes**
 - Almost finished with the gathering of calendar photos and content. The graphic designers are working away and we hope to have the calendars ready to distribute by the holiday gifting time, late November/early December.
 - Thank you to Eric Rice USFS, North Yuba Ranger District for a big batch of fire hose and to Tonio Hernandez for turning that hose into tow chain covers. Thank you to Cal Fire Station #61 for cutting hose for covers. The call for covers has been constant. Beverly delivered approx 100 covers to various locations in the foothills last Tuesday. Thousand Trails has distributed more than 200 covers in the last few months and we've received calls/requests from a number of other locations (Collins Lake, Gold Eagle/Brownsville and Foothill ACE) for "refills" for their cover "display". We hear lots of great stories about folks discovering "Tow chain covers", so we'll keep making them.
 - Thank you to Kurt Koerber from engine 331, Camptonville, for driving the fire hose to Dobbins so Beverly didn't have to go up to Camptonville. His efforts were greatly appreciated.
 - Thank you to Dobbins-Oregon House Fire Cadets for taking over managing the Red Flags for D/OH post office and The Fire Auxillary Thrift shop.
 - The "Yuba Youth Take Action" PSAs were featured at the Yuba-Sutter Film Festival a couple weeks ago. Thank you to Radu Sava, our film maker, for including our little fire safe PSA's in his whole collection of films that he presented there. Looking forward to hearing from a couple of our youth who were planning to attend the showing to see how the ads were received.
 - Please join the Outreach-Education Committee! Getting the messaging out about wildfire preparedness and resilience is extremely important, and we can use *your* help. Contact volunteer@yubafiresafe.org to join.
- **Board Report: Sean Griffis**
 - We wish Jeanene well in her future opportunities and retirement!
- **Executive Director Report: Allison Thomson**
 - We were awarded a \$100,000 grant from the California Fire Safe Council PG&E Wildfire Ready and Resilient Grant Program to start a Home Hardening Cost Share Program for the Yuba County Foothills. The program will launch in January and will provide 50% cost share match up to \$2,000 per residence for home hardening upgrades. This funding also includes a data collection component whereby we will integrate data on upgrades, costs, and effectiveness with the Yuba County Data Platform to build up a more accurate picture of local scale mitigation efforts for the purposes of risk assessment and decision making and even future funding eligibility.
 - We submitted a concept paper to the Coalitions and Collaboratives Action Implementation and Mitigation Grant Program to grow our defensible space assistance program. This concept paper was selected to submit a final application, due Nov 11.
 - We will organize a training for the Yuba County Data Platform (<https://yubacounty.opennrm.org>) – anyone interested in participating in the upcoming training

- can reach out to info@yubafiresafe.org (date TBD)
- The next YWPFSC meeting on Nov 10 will include a presentation from the California Department of Insurance. In preparation for that meeting, they asked us to gather any particular questions, concerns, specific topics of interest, legislation, issues, etc. They will customize the presentation for our community. Please send your questions and comments to info@yubafiresafe.org

Thank you for attending!

Regular Board of Directors Meeting

11:14 a.m.

Attendees

Sean Griffis

Pam Cook

Creighton Avila

Allison Thomson

Stephen Heter and Steve Andrews were absent.

- 1. Consider approval of minutes from the September 8, 2021 Regular Board Meeting.**
Upon motion of Director Cook, seconded by Director Avila, and carried, with Directors Heter and Andrews absent, the Board approved the minutes as written.
- 2. Consider approval of Wildfire Mitigation Review Program Operational Procedures and Safety Protocol.**
Upon motion of Director Cook, seconded by Director Avila, and carried, with Directors Heter and Andrews absent, the Board approved the Wildfire Mitigation Review Program Operational Procedures and Safety Protocol as written.
- 3. Discussion on COVID-19 protocols and virtual vs. in-person meetings.**
The Board discussed maintaining virtual council and board meetings until we test a hybrid system whereby participants can attend either in person at the Alcouffe Center or via live video and audio feed. Allison and Curtis will work to test the system at the Alcouffe Center over the next two months, after which the board will discuss moving to hybrid in-person/virtual meetings.
- 4. Discussion on filling admin assistant position.**
Discussion of changing the admin assistant position to a project coordinator role with more hours and responsibilities. Allison will send a revised job description and anticipated cost, but the board will not require approval of job description prior to posting.
- 5. Adjourn: 11:40 a.m.**

The next meeting has been scheduled for November 10, 2021.